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SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: CONGOLESE AMBASSADOR ARRIVES IN RWANDA

¶1. (SBU) Norbert Nkulu from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) arrived in Kigali November 2, to begin an assignment as the DRC's ambassador to Rwanda--the first since Presidents Kabila and Kagame took office. Ambassador met Nkulu on November 5, at a reception during which Nkulu warmly engaged Rwandan and other diplomatic counterparts. He said he "attached great personal importance" to developing relations with Rwanda and improving commercial relations between the DRC and the East African Community. Nkulu told Ambassador he had been "very well received" upon his arrival in Kigali, and accepted an invitation to attend an upcoming reception in honor of visiting Special Adviser for the Great Lakes Dr. Howard Wolpe.

¶2. (SBU) BIO NOTES: Nkulu, who is temporarily residing at the Serena Hotel in Kigali, told Ambassador that he previously had served as minister of state for President Joseph Kabila. He is married, with five children ranging in age from 30 to ¶10. He speaks French, but little English; his wife Veronique, a lawyer by profession, speaks English fluently and translated for him at the November 5 reception.

¶3. (SBU) COMMENT: The arrival of the Congolese ambassador, whose Rwandan counterpart recently arrived in Kinshasa, is a significant milestone in the developing relationship between Rwanda and the DRC. It follows the groundbreaking August 6 summit, when Rwandan President Paul Kagame walked across the border to meet in Goma with President Kabila, and reflects ongoing contacts and increased cooperation between the two countries, not just between security officials but also between those dealing with energy, foreign affairs and economic integration.

SYMINGTON